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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01

ACDA-19 DRC-01 /174 W
---------- 027606
R 151325Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9843
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SANAA
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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USLO PEKING
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NY
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 2071

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, PARM, SF, US, XO
SUBJ: US POLICY TOWARDS THE INDIAN OCEAN: SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT'S UNIQUE VIEW

REF: NEW DELHI 5616

1. SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) SEES US PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN IN VERY DIFFERENT LIGHT THAN DO GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL COUNTRIES. AS IS CASE WITH SO MANY OTHER SUBJECTS, SAG IS AGAIN ODD MAN OUT ON THIS ONE, LARGELY BECAUSE OF ITS VIRULENTLY ANTI-COMMUNIST POSTURE.

2. FOR YEARS A CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY HAS BEEN TO ENTER INTO MILITARY ALLIANCES WITH WESTERN POWERS AND TO FIND RELIEF FROM ARMS EMBARGO. THE SOUTH AFRICANS BELIEVE THAT EVEN INFORMAL MILITARY COOPERATION WITH WEST WOULD PROVIDE THEM WITH PROTECTION AGAINST ANY FUTURE EXTERNAL THREAT TO MAINTENANCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN SOUTH AFRICA. IN EARLY YEARS FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II, SOUTH AFRICA FAILED TO GET INTO NATO, SEATO OR OTHER MUTUAL DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS. BEST SHE COULD DO WAS SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT WITH UK.

3. HOWEVER, SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT AND ASSIDUOUS IN ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE WEST OF ITS NEED FOR CLOSER MILITARY COOPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THEIR TACTICS HAVE INCLUDED CONFIDENTIAL

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REPEATED REFERENCES TO WHAT THEY CONTINUE TO VIEW AS MONOLITHIC WORLDWIDE COMMUNIST THREAT TO AFRICA AND TO REST OF WORLD. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THEY HAVE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF CAPE SEA ROUTE TO WESTERN MARITIME NATIONS AND DANGER THAT UNCHECKED SOVIET NAVAL EXPANSION POSES TO IT.

4. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SAG IS VERY PLEASED ABOUT PROSPECT OF INCREASED AMERICAN PRESENACE IN INDIAN

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OCEAN--THE BIGGER THE BETTER. IT IS THEIR HOPE THAT DIEGO GARCIA WILL NOT RPT NOT, IN LONG RUN, PROVIDE THE RANGE OF FACILITIES THAT US WILL NEED. SOUTH AFRICANS INSTEAD LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN WE WILL NEED PORT FACILITIES ON AFRICAN MAINLAND. AND WHAT SINGLE AFRICAN COUNTRY, THEY ASK RHETORICALLY, CAN OFFER A STABLE POLITICAL SITUATION, HAS A GOVERNMENT WITH FIRM ANTI-COMMUNIST CONVICTIONS, AND WOULD BE FULLY WILLING TO GIVE US WHAT WE NEED.

5. WHILE SAG OFFICIALS RARELY RAISE INDIAN OCEAN POLICY WITH US, IT PROBABLE THAT THEY REGARD PEACE ZONE CONCEPT AS SIMPLY ANOTHER COMMUNIST-INSPIRED PLOY AND WOULD PREFER THAT USG ADOPT A TOUGH AND UNCOMPROMISING STANCE OF MAINTAINING STRONG NAVAL PRESENCE THERE AS COUNTERBALANCE TO SOVIET THREAT. HOW WE DO THIS, AND WHETHER OR NOT WE ANNOUNCE OUR INTENTIONS PUBLICALLY OR THROUGH QUITE BILATERAL DIPLOMACY, IS OF LITTLE RELEVANCE TO SAG.
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